

Message Text

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ORIGIN NRC-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00

OES-05 ERDA-07 FEA-01 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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AMEMBASSY BERN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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PASS TO SCIREPS TOKYO FOR BLOOM & HENOC

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:TECH

SUBJECT:THREE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS TO INCREASE POWER LEVELS
FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF ADDITIONAL DATA ON VIBRATIONS

REF: REPAIR A-2467

1. THREE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS WHICH HAVE BEEN OPERATING AT 50 PERCENT POWER DUE TO VIBRATION OF INSTRUMENT TUBES WILL BE PERMITTED TO INCREASE THEIR POWER LEVELS TO ABOUT 60 PERCENT. THE ACTION WAS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION'S OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION. THE PLANTS ARE PEACH BOTTOM UNITS 2 AND 3 IN PENNSYLVANIA AND THE COOPER STATION IN NEBRASKA. AT THE SAME TIME, THESE PLANTS WILL REDUCE THE COOLANT FLOW TO 40 PERCENT TO HELP PREVENT ADDITIONAL DAMAGE FROM THE VIBRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT TUBES. REVIEW OF ADDITIONAL DATA BY THE NRC STADF SHOWS THAT THE PLANTS CAN OPERATE SAFELY AT THE 40 PERCENT COOLANT FLOW, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME INCREASING THEIR POWER OUTPUT. THE PEACH BOTTOM UNITS ARE LOCATED IN YORK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AND ARE OPERATED BY THE PHILADELPHIA ELECTRIC COMPANY. THEIR FULL POWER RATING IS 1,065 MEGAWATTS EACH. THE COOPER STATION, A 778 MEGAWATT PLANT, IS OPERATED BY NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT AT BROWNSVILLE, NEBRASKA.

2. IN A RELATED ACTION, THE NRC HAS GIVEN APPROVAL TO THE VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER CORPORATION TO CONTINUE OPERATING ITS PLANT AT A LEVEL OF 80 PERCENT POWER AND MONITOR FOR VIBRATION UNTIL AUGUST 3, WHEN IT WILL BE SHUT DOWN TO MAKE INSPECTIONS AND ANY NEEDED REPAIRS RE-UNCLASSIFIED

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SULTING FROM THE VIBRATIONS. THE VERMONT YANKEE PLANT IS LOADCATED AT VERNON, VERMONT.

3. OTHER PLANTS WHICH HAVE SIMILAR DESIGNS ARE GEORGIA POWER COMPANY'S HATCH UNIT 1 AT BAXLEY, GEORGIA; CAROLINA LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY'S BRUNSWICK UNIT 2 AT SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA; THE XITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT OPERATED BY THE POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK AT SCRIBA, NEW YORK; THE PILGRIM PLANT OF BOSTON EDISON COMPANY, PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS; THE DUANE ARNOLD PLANT OF IOWA ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY, PALO, IOWA; AND UNITS 1 AND 2 OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY'S BROWNS FERRY PLANT AT DECATUR, ALABAMA.

4. THE HATCH PLANT IS IN THE POWER ESCALATION PHASE AND WILL BE OPERATED UP TO FULL POWER TO OBTAIN FURTHER INSTRUMENT READINGS. IF THOSE READINGS SHOW THE VIBRATIONS TO BE IN EXCESS OF THE NRC LIMITS, THE STAFF IS TO BE ADVISED IMMEDIATELY. THE BRUNSWICK AND FITZPATRICK PLANTS ARE STILL IN THE INITIAL STARTUP PHASE. MODIFICATIONS ALREADY HAVE BEEN MADE IN BOTH THE PILGRIM AND DUANE ARNOLD PLANTS TO CORRECT THE APPARENT CAUSE OF THE VIBRATIONS. THE MODIFICATIONS INVOLVE PLUGGING BYPASS HOLES IN THE PLATE SUPPORTING THE REACTOR FUEL CORE. THE FLOW OF COOLING WATER THROUGH THE BYPASS HOLES INDUCES MOVEMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT COMPONENTS SUFFICIENT TO CONTACT THE CORNERS OF THE CHANNEL BOXES, CAUSING WEAR AND CRACKING. CHANNEL BOXES ARE STRUCTURES AROUND BUNDLES OF FUEL RODS THAT HELP CONDUCT THE FLOW OF WATER PAST THE BUNDLES. THE TWO BROWNS FERRY UNITS ARE SHUT DOWN TO REPAIR DAMAGE FROM THE MARCH 22 FIRE. TVA WILL INSPECT REACTORS FOR DAMAGE FROM VIBRATION DURING THIS OUTRAGE.

5. OPERATORS OF THE AFFECTED BOILING WATER REACTORS WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR FOR VIBRATION WITH SPECIAL TESTS. A PERMANENT CORRECTION TO THE VIBRATION PROBLEM SHOULD BE AVAILABLE AND INSTALLED BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

6. EMBASSY SCIENCE ATTACHES ARE ASKED TO PASS THE ABOVE INFORMATION TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION TECHNICAL NOTIFICATION ADDRESSEES PER REF A-2467.
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7. ABOVE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN NRC PRESS RELEASE DATED JULY 24, 1975. KISSINGER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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